SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Problems of Social Position
Social Stratification

• Division of society into 3 or more classes of people

• Classes do not share equally in basic resources, influence and prestige
Social Stratification

• Related to economic production systems
  – Kin-based = family and descent groups
  – Class-based = socio-economics

• Specialization of labor tends to increase the potential for stratification
Social Stratification

• Results from the unequal distribution of goods and services within a society

• Asks the question:
  – Who gets what and Why?
Approaches

• Two main theoretical perspectives:
  – functions it makes to social order, STABILITY
  – contributions it makes to change, CONFLICT
Social Stratification

• We want to know:

  – How do such systems contribution to social integration and ORDER

  – How do such systems reflect conflict and stimulate social CHANGE
Concept of Status

• Contains an element of RANK ORDER

• summed up in the word HIERARCHY

• Status is social position occupied by the individual
Roles of Behavior

• Set of expected behaviors
  – ex. Gender roles
    – what is “masculine” or “feminine”
Social Status

• Achieved Status
  – achieved during one’s lifetime

• Ascribed Status
  – ascribed by birth
IDEOLOGY

• Accompanied by beliefs that obscure or legitimize inequality

  – ex.
    • Democratic ideals = U.S.
    • Egalitarian myths = U.S.S.R.
    • Religion = Indian Caste
CONFLICT

- Stability will be maintained if there is a feeling that the differences between groups is FAIR

- Can lead to Conflict if exchange is considered UNFAIR
SYSTEMS OF STRATIFICATION

• Rank Societies
  – people divided into hierarchy or order groups

• Non-ranked Societies
  – least stratified
  – people tend to treat each as equals
CASTE SYSTEM

- Ascribed Status
- Occupationally specific
- Marriage within castes
- Fixed for life - Closed system

- ex. India’s caste system
Untouchables
CLASS SYSTEM

• Developed with world economic system
• based on economic wealth
  – socioeconomic status
• Difficult to define - “nearly equal”
• Open system

• ex. America’s class system
SLAVERY

• Most extreme form of social stratification
• Ownership of people and their labor
• Associated with economic production strategies
  – sedentary agriculture